

no PRINCE BLOW AND HIS
MEMOIRS

but there were no black clouds directly overhead. Three bad mistakes in the field of foreign policy had been made since Bismarck's guiding hand had been withdrawn. The refusal to renew the secret treaty of reinsurance with Russia when its three-year term ended in 1890 was a costly error, for it accelerated the drift of Russia towards France. Co-operation with the Dual Alliance to rob Japan of some of the fruits of victory over China angered a nation whose full strength was unrealized and who knew how to wait for the day of revenge. Finally the Kruger telegram ended the cordial relations between the British Empire and the new Germany, and taught the man in the street to think of the two countries for the first time as potential foes. All nations, however, make mistakes at times, and the relations of the Great Powers changed so frequently with their momentary needs or interests that there was always a chance for a resourceful diplomatist to counteract or circumscribe the evil that had been wrought. Germany's strength was undeniable, yet common sense suggested that the Bismarckian maxim of limited liability was still the best. At home the wealth of the country was increasing by leaps and bounds, and there seemed to be no limit to its power and prosperity in the years that lay ahead. All that was needed was skilful steering of the ship.

On the way from Rome to Kiel, where the Kaiser was awaiting him, Billow stopped in Frankfurt to meet Eulenburg, who gave him a brief but pregnant memorandum. William H, he wrote, took everything subjectively. Only personal arguments impressed him. He liked to instruct, not to be instructed. He hated to be bored. He must shine, and he desired to do and determine everything himself, though often

with unfortunate results. He was ambitious and
jealous, and
a proposal had the best chance of acceptance if
made to appear
that it came from himself. Everything had to
be made easy
for him. Biilow must never forget that His
Majesty needed
occasional praise. He was one of those natures
which lose
their spirits if they do not receive recognition,
and when he
deserved it he was as grateful as a good and
clever child. No
one but Eulenburg, most subtle of psychologists
and a born
writer, could have described the ruler so
accurately in a few
sentences, and the advice which Biilow received
from other
quarters tallied with his testimony. Lucanus, the
head of the
Kaiser's Civil Cabinet, used to say that he often
slipped, but
that he usually picked himself up if he had the
right counsellor